

[Ernest Marshall]

1

[Folkstuff: Range-lore?]

Annie McAulay

Maverick, Texas.

Page one

RANGE-LORE

Ernest Marshall, who was born March 5, 1883 at Buffalo Gap, Taylor County, Texas, tells the following story:

"I learned to work and to ride when I was quite young but I was never much of a hand to ride broncs. I usually let the other fellows do that. There was plenty of 'em that could and seemed to enjoy it.

"I liked space, even when I was a kid I liked to work out of doors, but I didn't like going to school and I didn't have any love for school teachers. I remember some of us boys used to make a target of the school house when nobody was looking. We delighted in breaking our window lights and knocking brick flues down. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 But we wouldn't have really harmed anyone, not even a school teacher. We didn't have much of a school in them days, I guess, just a one-teacher affair, which lasted only three or four or maybe five months each year. We'd usually quit school when fourteen or fifteen years of age to go to work on the farm or ranch.

"We continued to have our fun and play pranks after we were nearly grown. Prayer meetings or some kind of religious service was always held at the school house on

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Sunday nights, and we would go in and keep very quiet 'til the service was over, then we felt free to make all the noise we wanted to and six-shooters could be heard popping amid whoops and yells, to the consternation of our parents, who tried to civilize us. Folks would be real excited to hear a hullabaloo like that at a public gathering these days.

“At one time I worked on the Bar [S?] Ranch, owned by Rome Shields, about eighty miles west of San Angelo, near Stiles. He owned one of the largest ranches in that part of the state. He tried to build a town and make it a great commercial center. He had on his ranch one of the biggest supply houses I ever saw. I worked as an ordinary cowhand, never made any long drives nor saw any stampedes that amounted to anything. Our biggest job was rounding up and culling or cutting the cattle for marketing or branding. We'd have to do some hard riding then, and there was lots of noise and excitement until that was over. 3
“Later, I worked on a horse ranch in New Mexico, owned by John Converse. It was called the XSX Ranch. He raised Polo ponies for the Philadelphia market. The country was new to me, and pretty soon after going there, another new hand and myself were sent a few miles away for the mail. The boys took turns going for the mail. Well, it was dark when we started back to the ranch and as there were trails and roads branching off in various directions along our route, we got lost out there on the prairie. We knew we would never find our way to the ranch in the dark, so we just sat down and waited for daylight to come. We discovered that we were on our own ranch and only a little ways from the ranch house. The other boys sure got a big laugh out of that.

“We sure had some good riders on that ranch. I saw one fellow ride a horse plum to death. He was sure some stayer. The boss had just received seventeen raw ponies, young stuff, most of them, and we were going to break some of them to use on the ranch. This boy rode his horse until he had ridden him down, and the horse died a few hours later. The rider didn't seem to be any the worse for his hard riding.

“Once, I stopped over in Ardmore, Oklahoma, with old Bill Ausgood, on business. Old Bill was called the “shouting Methodist”, but somehow, he tied up with a tin horn gambler and

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they got into an argument about something and the gambler jumped on Bill with a knife. 4 He stabbed him in the back several times before anyone could stop him. Bill lost plenty of blood and carried the scars on his back to his grave. There were plenty or tough humbres in the Indian Territory.

“Now you know cowboys were considered good natured fellows, but one time over at Maverick somebody had worked up a dance and didn't invite me and some of the other boys. Well, in those days then a shendig was given in the neighborhood it was customary to invite everybody, and when they slighted us we decided to have some fun anyway. They had paid a string band from San Angelo seventeen dollars to come out and play for the dance. We waited until about ten o'clock when everything was going good and we rode up and started the fun. We began shooting high at the top of the house, the music stopped, women screamed, and they put the lights out. We rode off a little ways and waited to see what happened. In a few minutes the lights were turned on and everybody left the dance in a hurry. That was the end of that shendig; we had our fun at the dance, after all.” Range-lore

Annie McAulay

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ernest Marshall, Maverick, Texas, interviewed, January 6, 1936.